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Notes.



Matt. xxvi. 64.

BY REV. S. J. ANDREWS, D.D.

IS the form of the Lord's reply, "Thou hast said," to the question of his judges, "Art thou the Christ?" to be regarded as an affirmation?

This form of speech, occurring several times in the Gospels, is generally taken by commentators as an express affirmation, and this on the ground of Rabbinical usage. Most refer as their authority to Schoetgen, "*Horae Hebraicae*," who in his note on *Matt.* xxvi. 25 says: "*Σὺ εἶπας*, solennis adfirmantium apud Judaeos formula," and gives two Rabbinical citations in proof. Lightfoot, in his "*Horae Hebraicae*," passes over this and like passages without remark. All the later commentators at hand take Schoetgen's proof as sufficient. Thus Meyer says, on the same passage: "a Rabbinical formula by which an emphatic affirmation is made." It is generally agreed that a like usage is not found in classic writers, though Grotius quotes from Euripides as not *dissimile*: *Σὺ δὲ λέγεις πάντ', οὐκ ἔγω* (*Dicis haec tu, non ego*).

A recent writer, an English clergyman of Jewish descent, G. W. Pieritz, A.M., has in a little book, "*The Gospels from a Rabbinical Point of View*" (London, 1873), questioned this assertion of Schoetgen. He asserts that the passages cited by him do not prove the point, and are capable of a different interpretation; and that the expression "thou sayest," or "hast said," is neither an affirmative nor a negative answer, but no answer at all. It is a refusal to answer. In confirmation of this he quotes from Origen on *Matt.* xxvi. 63, 64, who says: "It was not fit that the Lord should answer the high priest's adjuration, as though under compulsion, and therefore he neither denied nor confessed himself the Son of God." This quotation I have not been able to verify. I find in Maldonatus, *in loco*, the statement that Augustine affirms that the Lord in this answer neither concedes nor denies, *neque concedere, neque negare*.

For the grounds on which Pieritz rejects the citations of Schoetgen as conclusive, I must refer to his book. If the question may be considered as an open one, let us examine the several passages in which this phrase is found. But first we may notice in general the reticence of the Lord in affirming himself to be the Messiah. This has often been discussed, and I have nothing new to say. His mere affirmation that he was the Messiah would have convinced few. He himself said: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." And the Pharisees objected that he did bear witness of himself (John viii. 13). It was the truth of his words as unfolding the meaning of the law and prophets, and the power and character of his works, which must convince the Jews of the fact of his divine mission. Whilst it was known to all that he claimed to be the Messiah, yet only to those who believed on him, or at least were friendly to him, did he up to the time of his arrest distinctly declare it (see John iv. 26; ix. 37). Even so late in his ministry as the Feast of Dedication (John x. 22) the Jews said to him: "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." He answered: "I told you, and ye believed not." Yet no mention is made of any occasion on which he told them so in plain terms.

When brought before the high priest and council, and later before Pilate, and questioned in a judicial way as to his Messiahship, how should we expect the Lord to answer? The reason usually given for his reserve had no longer any force. But he was not before impartial judges. At the council held immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus it had been determined to put him to death, and his condemnation by Caiaphas and his associates was a foregone conclusion. We are told that to all the testimony of the false witnesses he made no reply, so that the high priest said, "Answerest thou nothing?" Still he held his peace. At last the high priest adjures him: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" The Lord replies: *Σὺ εἶπας*, "Thou hast said." In themselves the words are of dubious meaning. If we lay emphasis on *Σὺ*, "*Thou* hast said," it may mean, "*I* have not said it, it is not true;" or, "Thou hast said it, what thou hast said is true;" or, "Thou hast said it, I neither affirm nor deny it." It is in the last meaning that our phrase "you say so" is more generally taken. If the Lord's reply is thus understood, he declines to answer the question, and yet affirms that he is the Messiah by immediately adding: "I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of man" — me, the Son of man — "sitting on the right hand of power, and

coming in the clouds of heaven." This refusal to affirm himself in express terms the Christ would be in keeping with all his previous refusals, and yet there seems to be no sufficient ground for it here. Why make an indirect instead of a direct answer? The use of the word *παλιν* — "nevertheless," "Thou hast said, nevertheless I say unto you," — although usually having an adversative meaning, modifying what goes before, is not at all decisive; for it may be understood as by Ellicott: "Besides my assertion, you shall have the testimony of your own eyes;" or as by Grotius: "Quamquam mihi Christum me affirmanti non creditis."

It is certainly possible to say that in his answer to the adjuration of the high priest, the Lord neither affirms nor denies his Messiahship, as one declining to be put under oath before such a tribunal; but he claims prerogatives which could belong to no one but the Messiah. He does not appropriate to himself the title "Son of God" in his reply, but calls himself "Son of man"; yet the high priest says: "He hath spoken blasphemy," as if the two titles were to be regarded as equivalent.

If now we turn to the parallel account in Mark, we find the Lord's reply to be an express affirmation: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" "I am." *Εγω εμυ*. Pieritz asserts that if the Lord meant "I am the Christ," he would have said *εμυ*. The addition of *εγω* would make the meaning to be, "I am somebody," or "I am that I am," or "I exist." The Lord's reply would then be: "I am what I am," thus neither affirming nor denying that he was the Son of the Blessed. But this distinction of *εγω εμυ* and *εμυ* is not confirmed by an examination of the Gospels. If we, then, take this as an express affirmation, we must understand the "Thou hast said" of Matthew as an affirmation. It is possible, indeed, that the Lord was twice asked the question by the high priest, "Art thou the Christ?" and answered it in both ways.

The statement in Luke (xxii. 67) gives the question and reply in a somewhat different form. "If thou art the Christ, tell us. If I tell you, ye will not believe. . . . But from henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God. . . . Art thou, then, the Son of God? . . . Ye say that I am." This reply they accept as an affirmation. Meyer calls the Lord's replies "evasive." If we accept the translation: "Ye say it, because I am," it wholly corresponds to the reply in Mark.

In his examination before Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 11, and Luke xxiii. 3), to the question: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he

answered: *Σὺ λεγεις*, "Thou sayest." If this is taken as equivalent to "I am," some have thought it strange that Pilate should at once have dismissed the charge against him (Luke xxiii. 4). But the statements of John (xviii. 37) sufficiently explain the grounds of Pilate's action. To the charges of the accusers the Lord made no answer. To the questions of Pilate, as given by John: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" the Lord first replies by asking him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" And again: "Thou sayest that I am a king" (as given in margin of R.V. "Thou sayest it, because I am a king").

If we regard the reply in Mark as decisive of the meaning of the words in Matthew, we must accept *Σὺ εἶπας* as an affirmation. And the same meaning must be given it in other places. Thus in Matt. xxvi. 25, in answer to Judas' question, "Master, is it I?" the Lord replies, *Σὺ εἶπας* — "Thou hast said," or in other words, "Thou art he who shall betray me." If these words were spoken aloud, Judas must have been then revealed to all as the traitor. But there seems good reason to believe that when he left the supper his fellow-disciples did not know of his treachery.

It is to be wished that some competent scholar would further examine this matter, and determine how far the statements of Schoetgen and his Rabbinical proofs are to be relied on.

Eberhard Vischer's Theory of the Composition of the Revelation.

BY REV. S. M. JACKSON, M.A.

IN October, 1886, the third part of the second volume of Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, appeared bearing the separate title, *Die Offenbarung Johannis eine jüdische Apokalypse in christlicher Bearbeitung*, von EBERHARD VISCHER. *Mit einem Nachwort von Adolf Harnack*, Leipzig, 1886. The object of this note is to give a brief account of Vischer's treatise.

Its title states its purport, viz. to prove that the Revelation is a Jewish Apocalypse in a Christian redaction. The occasion for this theory was the thesis Professor Harnack set at Giessen early in 1885: "The theological standpoint of the author of the Revelation of John." When Mr. Vischer, who was one of his pupils, remarked to him that